



DEFIANT

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\$2.50

\$3.50 CANADA

DARK DOMINION™



SU
Mikellner

MEXICO, THE YUCATÁN
PENINSULA, THE TEMPLE OF
QUETZALCOATL ...

THERE IS AN UNSEEN WORLD THAT SOME
PEOPLE CALL THE **SUBSTRATUM**. IT'S A
QUANTUM PLANE THAT RESONATES WITH ALL
THE ENERGIES OF THE UNIVERSE.

I HAVE LEARNED HOW TO PERCEIVE
THIS PLANE AND I AM LEARNING TO
READ THE RESONANCES AND MANIP-
ULATE THE ENERGIES.

I'VE HAD SOME HELP AND I
FIND I NEED SOME MORE, SO
I CAME HERE SEARCHING FOR
AVALON, THE MYSTICAL
SUBSTRATUM REFUGE
MENTIONED TO ME BY THE
QUANTUM CHAMPION CALLED
GALAHAD --

-- BUT SO FAR, ALL I'VE
MANAGED TO FIND IS TROUBLE!

YOU SHOULD NOT
HAVE COME TO THIS
PLACE OF GREAT
POWER ...

...NOW YOU WILL
NEVER LEAVE.

THE WAY TO AVALON!

WRITTEN BY: JANET JACKSON AND LEN WEIN
DRAWN BY: JOHN RIDGWAY INKED BY: DAVE COCKRUM
PAINTED BY: SU McTEIGUE LETTERED BY: ROD OLLERENSHAW
EDITED BY: PAULINE WEISS



THAT MIGHT
HAVE BEEN
TRUE AT ONE
TIME --



...UL KÉ...

--BUT NOT ANY
MORE. I'VE LEARNED
ENOUGH TO HANDLE
EVEN YOU.



C'MON, HAROLD--
WE'RE MISSING
THE TOUR.

HANG ON, SHIRLEY--
I WANT A
PICTURE OF
THIS.



HAROLD, IT'S
A ROCK!

YEAH, BUT IT'S
A REALLY
OLD ROCK!

FOR WHAT THIS TRIP IS COSTIN'
US, I WANNA HAVE SOMETHIN'
TO SHOW FOR IT!



DON'T BLAME ME, BOYCHIK!
I WANTED TO GO TO PALM
SPRINGS, REMEM--

HAROLD, ARE
YOU LISTENING
TO ME?

HUH?



OH, SORRY, SHIRLEY.

JUST THOUGHT I
SAW SOMETHING
WEIRD WHEN I
SNAPPED THAT
PICTURE.

I WARNED YOU NOT
TO DRINK THE LOCAL
WATER, DIDN'T I?



YOUR TIME IS PASSING, OLD ONE.

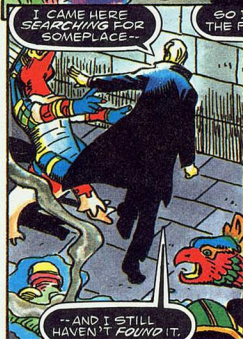
WE GROW STRONGER AS OUR TIME GROWS NEAR!



THERE'S AN OLD EXPRESSION--

"DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS BEFORE THEY ARE HATCHED."

...AGK...



I CAME HERE SEARCHING FOR SOMEPLACE--

--AND I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND IT.



SO I'LL JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW THE PATTERNS OF POWER ELSEWHERE!



WE WILL HAVE YOU SOON ENOUGH, OLD MAN.



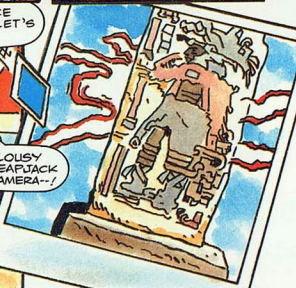
SO, WHADDYA THINK...?

SOME KINDA DOUBLE EXPOSURE MAYBE?



C'MON, HAROLD--THIS PLACE IS GIVIN' ME THE CREEPS. LET'S GO FIND THE OTHERS.

LOUSY CHEAPJACK CAMERA--!





THAILAND, BANGKOK,
THE TEMPLE OF
TRANQUILITY...



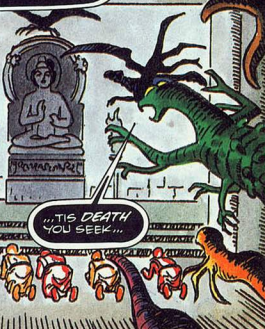
PERHAPS
HERE...



... IF THERE EVER WERE
A SANCTUARY FROM
THE BURDENS OF
THE WORLD...

THEN, AGAIN, PERHAPS *NOT* SOMEHOW, I
DON'T BELIEVE THERE ARE DEMONS
IN AVALON.

HAH! IT IS THE
OLD ONE OF THE
LIGHT! DESTROY
HIM!



...TIS DEATH
YOU SEEK...



FORGET IT!

I'VE NEVER THE TIME
OR THE INCLINATION
TO FIGHT YOU NOW!



... HIS
SPIRIT
IS
STRONG...

... STILL, HE WILL NOT
LAST LONG IN THE
TIME TO COME.

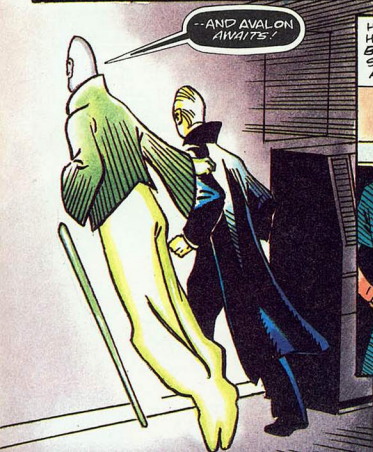
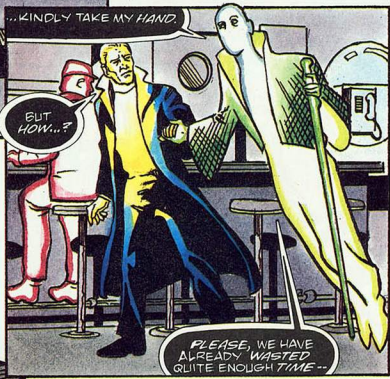
< GO WITH THE BLESSINGS
OF BUDDHA, MICHAEL
ALEXANDER. >

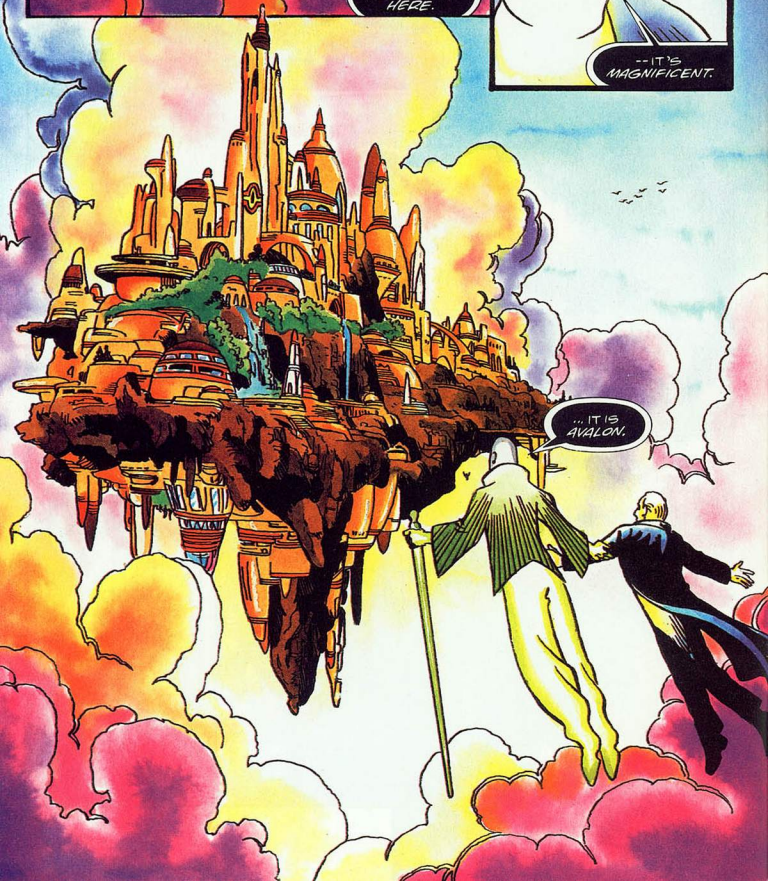
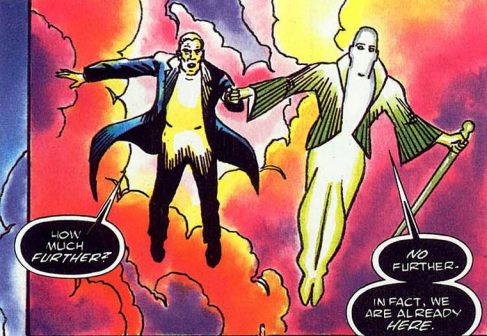
< WE ARE ALL
OF US
DEPENDING
ON YOU. >













THIS PLACE IS BEAUTIFUL,
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE
PREPARING FOR WAR.

WE ARE INDEED, AND THE
DISTURBANCES ON THE
QUANTUM PLANE MAY WELL
SPILL OVER, EVEN TO
THE HARD WORLD.

OUR GLIMMER OF
HOPE. HOW GOOD TO
SEE YOU AGAIN, BROTHER.



HMM... HEY!



GAHAAD!



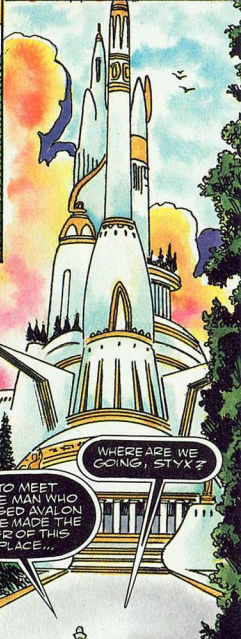
YOU LOOK A LOT HEALTHIER THAN
THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

I'M STILL WEAK
FROM MY INJURIES
AND WORN FROM
MY YEARS OF
BATTLE, BUT
I'LL LIVE.



COME, MICHAEL ALEXANDER.

WE SHALL
MEET AGAIN,
MY FRIEND.



WHERE ARE WE
GOING, STYX?

TO MEET
THE MAN WHO
CAUSED AVALON
TO BE MADE THE
RULER OF THIS
PLACE...

TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF,
GAHAAD.





THE MOST
AUGUST AND
HONORED
HIGH LORD
THRAAKHL!

JUST PLAIN THRAAKHL
IF YOU DON'T MIND.

WELCOME,
MICHAEL
ALEXANDER,
I'VE BEEN
WAITING
FOR YOU.

JUST
MICHAEL WILL
DO. WHY DID
YOU WANT ME
TO COME HERE?

BECAUSE I THINK YOU
ARE ONE OF THE FEW BEINGS
IN THE WORLD THAT CAN
HELP ME.

I THINK YOU ARE, FROM WHAT
YOUR FRIEND GALAHAD HAS TOLD
ME. BUT I NEED TO KNOW...

MICHAEL, TELL ME, CAN YOU ATTUNE
YOUR ENERGIES TO MATCH OURS, CHANGE
YOUR VIBRATIONAL FREQUENCY TO THAT
OF AVOLON ITSELF?

I CAN
TRY.

LIKE THAT?

JUST LIKE THAT.

YOU'RE AN
EXTRAORDINARY
GUY, MICHAEL.

SO THEY TELL
ME. NOW, IF...

RIGHT, I'LL
GET STRAIGHT
TO THE POINT.

HAVE YOU EVER
SEEN THIS BOX
BEFORE?

NO, I DON'T THINK
SO. WHAT'S SO
SPECIAL ABOUT IT?

... BUT THERE'S A YOUNG MAN
WITH A POWERFUL MIND THAT
BELIEVES THAT THERE IS
SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT.

NOTHING AT ALL,
IT'S JUST A BOX...



I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT, THRAKAHL.



CENTRAL PARK,
NEW YORK.

THE SUBSTRATUM
CITADEL OF THE
CREATURE CALLED
MULE.



WITH CHASM GONE, THE DARK DOMINION
IS WIDE OPEN. I'M TAKING IT *BACK*, BUT
I'M NOT GONNA STOP AT THE SUBSTRATUM.
I WANT AN EMPIRE ON THE *HARD WORLD*,
TOO.

THAT *BOX* IS
THE KEY TO
EVERYTHING--

ALONG WITH THE
KID THAT HAS
THE POWER.



THE POWER
TO MAKE
WISHES
COME
TRUE...

HE'S GONNA MAKE *MY* WISHES
COME TRUE, ALL RIGHT. HE'S GONNA
MAKE ME ABLE TO WALK THE *HARD*
WORLD AGAIN.



NOW GO. LOCATE THE
KID AND THE *BOX* THAT
ACTIVATES HIM.

AND FIND
'EM QUICK!



I'M SURE WE'RE
NOT THE *ONLY*
ONES LOOKING
FOR THEM.

CALIFORNIA.

HERE I AM ON SOME
KIND OF "QUEST" FOR
A MAN I JUST MET. I
MIGHT BE WRONG TO DO
THIS, BUT I'M LEARNING
TO TRUST MY INSTINCTS
AND THIS FEELS RIGHT.

I'M ALSO LEARNING THAT
ON THE QUANTUM PLANE,
INSTINCTS ARE MORE
THAN JUST FEELINGS.

WHOA!

I'VE GOT TO
PAY MORE
ATTENTION TO
WHAT I'M
DOING!

I'M NOT
QUITE USED
TO THE
DANCE.

EXTEND MY
AWARENESS,
HE SAID...

...VAGRANT
CURRENTS...

GOT
IT!

I HOPE!

LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA.

THE HOME OF
YOUNG REGINALD
JACKSON--

--SECRETLY THE
GOOD GUY KNOWN
AS NOBODY!--

MAN,
THIS
IS SO
MUSHY!

ROB
LIEFELD
ASKS HIS
GIRLFRIEND
TO MARRY
HIM IN
YOUNG-
BLOOD!

AT LEAST
HE STILL
LIKES
COMICS,
SO HE'S
NOT
TOTALLY
RUINED.

HUH?

WHO'S
THERE?

GETTING
PRETTY
PERCEPTIVE.
AREN'T
YOU, KID?

WHO ARE YOU?

MY FRIENDS
CALL ME MULE.

SOME
FRIENDS.

SOMETHING'S GOING DOWN,
SOMETHING BIG. YOU'RE GOING
TO NEED FRIENDS, KID.

I'D LIKE US TO
BE FRIENDS.

ALREADY
GOT
SOME.

YEAH, I KNOW.
AND YOU COULD
ALL USE A GUY
LIKE ME AS
YOUR FRIEND.

WE'RE NOT
AT WAR.

YOU STILL GOT
TO TAKE SIDES.
I COULD HELP YOU
AND YOU COULD HELP ME.

DO WHAT?

MAKE MY WISH
COME TRUE, THAT'S ALL.

YOU AND
YOUR FRIENDS
KNOW HOW TO
DO THAT.
DON'T YOU?

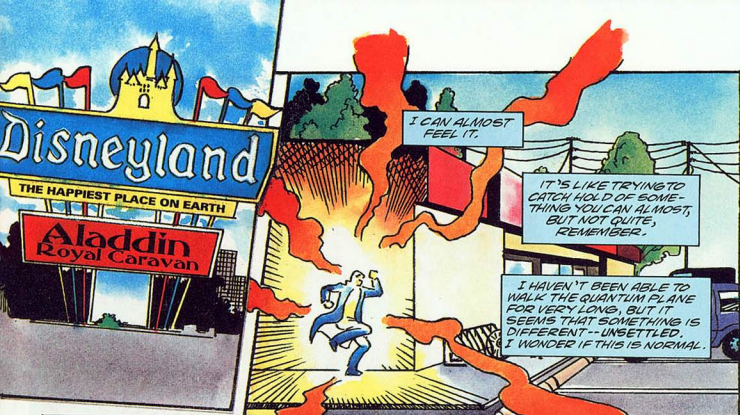
NO.

HAVE IT YOUR WAY,
KID. I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN.

SOON.

HEY, ZACH? --
OKAY, SPELLCASTER.
WE'VE GOT
TO TALK!





I CAN ALMOST
FEEL IT.

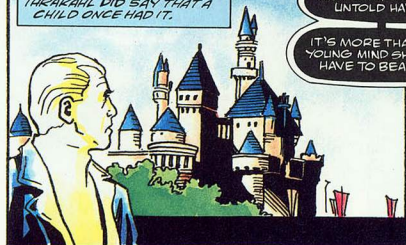
IT'S LIKE TRYING TO
CATCH HOLD OF SOME-
THING YOU CAN ALMOST,
BUT NOT QUITE,
REMEMBER.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO
WALK THE QUANTUM PLANE
FOR VERY LONG, BUT IT
SEEMS THAT SOMETHING IS
DIFFERENT--UNSETTLED.
I WONDER IF THIS IS NORMAL.

THIS IS A STRANGE PLACE
FOR THE BOX TO BE, BUT
THRAKAHL DID SAY THAT A
CHILD ONCE HAD IT.

THE POWER TO CREATE
UNTOLD HAVOC --

IT'S MORE THAN ANY
YOUNG MIND SHOULD
HAVE TO BEAR.



I KNOW
THAT IT'S
VERY
CLOSE.

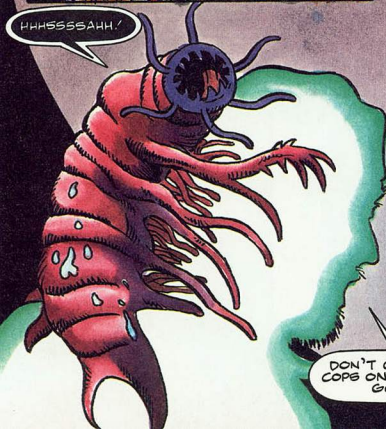
--PHANTOM
ENERGIES...

I KEEP GETTING
GLIMPSES... LIKE A
DISTANT SCENT
CARRIED ON A
BREEZE.

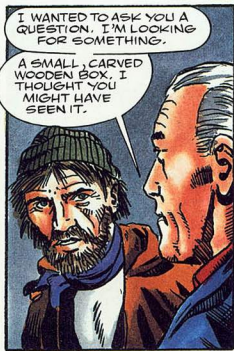
IT COULD BE
RIGHT AROUND
ANY...

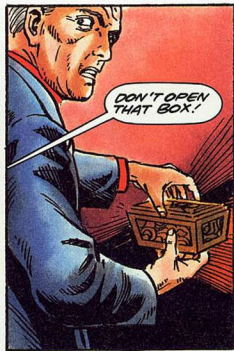
...CORNER.

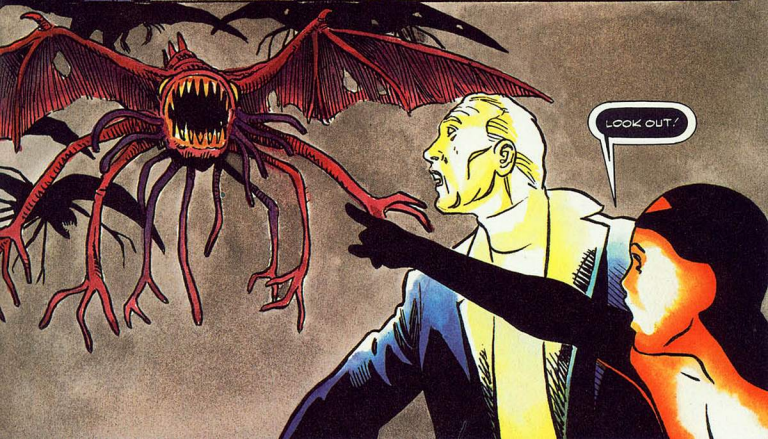




DON'T CALL THE COPS ON ME! I'LL GO!









GET BACK, SON! THESE THINGS ARE AS BAD AS THEY LOOK!

THESE LOOK SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE MULE'S MINIONS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'D BE DOING SO FAR FROM HOME, THOUGH.

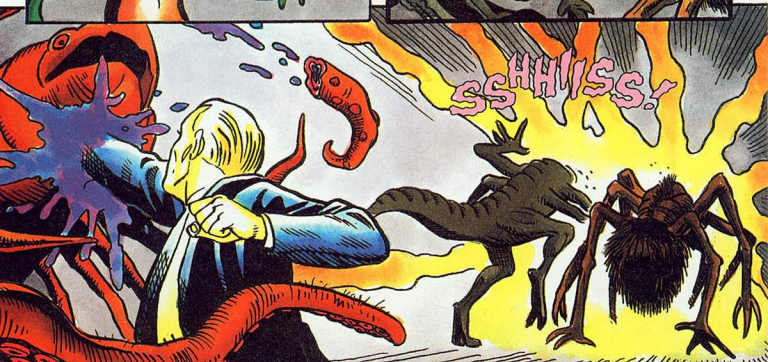
IF YOU CAN DO IT, I CAN.

URKK!

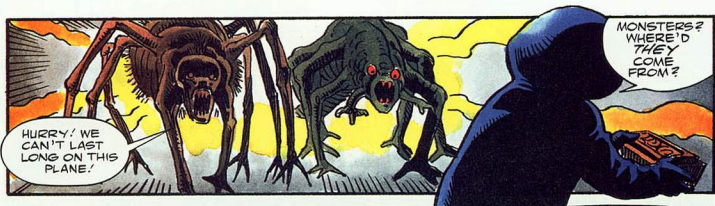
LORD MULE SAID TO TRIGGER THE SPELL TO ENTER THE HARD WORLD WHEN WE FOUND THE BOY!

QUICKLY, WHILE THEY'RE DISTRACTED!

SQUEEE!



SSHH/SS!



HURRY! WE CAN'T LAST LONG ON THIS PLANE!

MONSTERS? WHERE'D THEY COME FROM?



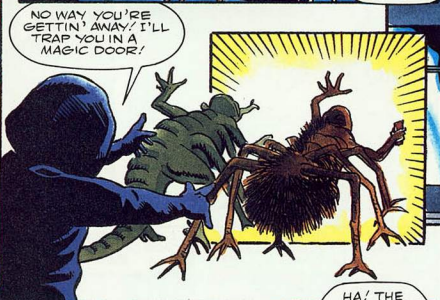
HEY!



QUICK! GET IT TO LORD MULE. HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO.

WHAT ABOUT THE KID?

LEAVE HIM TO MULE.



NO WAY YOU'RE GETTIN' AWAY! I'LL TRAP YOU IN A MAGIC DOOR!



A DOOR THAT WON'T LET THE BOX PASS!



HA! THE MIGHTY AND MYSTERIOUS SPELL-CASTER BEATS THE MONSTERS AND GETS BACK THE BOX OF ENCHANTMENT!



AVALON.

MICHAEL,
YOU'RE BACK!

I'VE GOT THE BOX, THRAKAHL,
AND I PROMISED TWO YOUNG
MEN THAT IT WOULD BE SAFE.

THAT'S ALL I
WANTED FROM
THE BEGINNING.

SAY, ONE OF THE
PAGES WILL SHOW
YOU TO THE LIBRARY
IF YOU'RE
INTERESTED.

OH, I'M
INTERESTED.

I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT BE.

YEP, THIS
IS ONE
WILD CARD
I'LL BE
GLAD TO
HAVE OUT
OF THE
DECK.

IT'S STACKED
AGAINST US
ENOUGH AS
IT IS.

CRAZY WORLD.

AND
GETTING
CRAZIER.

NEXT ISSUE: SCHISM

DETAILS of the DOMINION

Reminder:
To better understand
the Quantum Substratum -
Keep a journal about the things
I've encountered there.

MULE

Mule was once the undisputed ruler of the Dark Dominion before Chasm came along. He organized and ruled the demons from his stronghold, a quantum fortress in Central Park. He built a ready-made empire for Chasm to conquer.



Mule was a man long ago, who through arcane studies turned to see the substratum when deep in ritual trance. He finally learned to enter the Quantum Plane using the device of magic. Like me, he found that physical pain is lessened when in quantum form. After an injury, he completed a ritual working and entered the substratum for a lengthy time. He found that he had forgotten how to return to the hard world. Mule has only vague memories of what it was like to be a man. His desperation to regain his lost humanity led Mule to bargain with a powerful demon, Bottom. Mule was betrayed by Bottom and nearly killed in the process. I saved his life by taking him back to the substratum. Once on the Quantum Plane again, he took over Bottom's role as self-appointed overlord of despair. Now, even Chasm fears him.



letters TO THE EDITOR

DEFIANT welcomes your comments.

Please address all mail to:
Letters to the Editor
DEFIANT
232 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

JIM SHOOTER
Editor in Chief
WINSTON FOWLKES
Publisher

JANET JACKSON
Creative Director

PAULINE WEISS
Senior Editor

JOE JAMES
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Dear DEFIANT,
After hearing a lot about *DARK DOMINION* #1, I decided to get it. Wow! It was really different from other hero-type comics—a middle-aged writer as the hero. Truly *defiant* of the normal muscle-bound super-hero type. Bravo! In addition, I think that the artwork really suits the title and the stories, with such details as *Michael's* glow and the way the creatures of the *Quantum Substratum* look.

I've just finished *DARK DOMINION* #7. Pretty interesting developments. So, the creatures of the Substratum can now affect the real world, eh? I wonder if the creature destroyed by *The Puritan* was actually conjured up by him? Even more interesting is the fact that *Michael* found actual people living their entire existence in the substratum. *Galahad*? Isn't he from the King Arthur stories? The *Quantum Field* looks absolutely fantastic from the air. Too bad we couldn't get a full page for that one, but I'm not complaining. *Vex* was interesting, especially *Michael's* diary description of it. (So when are we going to see the pair called Sick and Tired?)

I'm just curious about one thing: What would places of religion look like in the *Quantum Substratum*? Would they have a replica in the Substratum which shines as brightly as, if not brighter than, *Michael*? Would people who are infested with creatures of the Substratum (but with a strong-enough faith) enter and come out clean and untouched? (This is just to satisfy my curiosity. I'm not

a very religious person myself.)

Until *Michael* becomes muscle-bound, you've got a loyal fan.

Yeong Kay Kin
Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia

We asked writer Len Wein about places of religion in the Quantum Substratum. He says, "Since the Quantum Substratum is another side of our world, their places of worship wouldn't really be far removed from our own, though they might be darker..."

Dear Editor,
Ah, how much sense the Vexlings of *DARK DOMINION* #7 make! Surely it is Vexlings that work on the wheels of grocery carts, for example. Humans have been explaining away the things that cause fear or bother them since before the advent of the written word. I do hope we will see more of *Galahad* and *Peaches*. *Galahad's* handing over of the reins of championship seemed too quick, somehow.

Len Wein makes this book a winner by making it so modern and yet with ancient roots. I am glad that J.G. Jones is keeping the same art style as Joe James; I'd like to know more about him. I suppose that two gentlemen with matching initials should stick together.

Melissa Page
Nortonville, KY

Before he entered the realm of comics, J.G. Jones taught painting and drawing at the State University of New York in Albany, NY and was the resident production artist and editorial cartoonist for

Brooklyn Paper Publications (circulation: 90,000). J.G.'s caricatures have been used by the New York City Council and the American Civil Liberties Union, among others. His art has been exhibited at galleries in New York, Vermont, and his home state of Louisiana. Jim Shooter "discovered" J.G. when he saw the ascan of Rant, an independent horror comic on which J.G. collaborated with Jonathan Larsen. Since Rant is the shadowy, brooding story of an ancient vampire in contemporary New York City, Jim thought J.G. was a natural for DARK DOMINION. We hope you agree!

Dear People,
I've been very busy lately and parenting a six-month-old boy has also eaten into my "spare" time. However, I felt I had to write you another letter of support for what you are doing in *DARK DOMINION*. I've heard and read some negative comments on *DEFIANT* lately, which are narrowly-mindedly based on what you are *not* doing! It's not Ditko and Leialoha, so disappointment sets in and colors people's opinions, and you get the backlash. I experienced it myself with *WAR DANCER*. Jim Shooter lauds it as the linchpin of the *DEFIANT* Universe. I, therefore, anticipated something as stimulating as *DARK DOMINION*. Having such positive expectations instead of just accepting it's not my kind of comic, I negatively judged it as a stilted and staccato collection of comic book clichés.

My apologies to all concerned; it's not that bad, I'm just insultingly exaggerating to make the point that value judgments are not made in isolation. I just see this immense potential for enjoyable comics, so I do hope you have the momentum to overcome these prejudices. As one of the characters says in *DARK DOMINION* #6, at least you're trying to make a difference. Thanks—it is appreciated.

There's a letter (from *Daniel Beaulieu and friends*) in the same issue about Rob Liefeld joining *DEFIANT*. If it helps both of you to produce some good comics, great. What I'd like to see is you giving writers parity with the artists (like the old EC Comics did) or even priority, and go "full script" more. I prefer to read well-constructed "proper" stories, not continuity drawings decorated with words. Jim has always said Story, Story, Story; that's why I buy *DEFIANT* and not some of their competitors.

To be honest, I want to eventually get a job in the industry, and *DARK DOMINION* appeals to me for that reason, too. It's one of the few mainstream titles that makes any connections with me.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Cairns
North Shields
Tyne & Wear
England

See Jim's editorial in DARK DOMINION #7 (and our other April books) about his team-up with Rob Liefeld.

Dear Jim Shooter and company,
The mystery deepens, one would say after reading *DARK DOMINION* #7, were that person to have any sense for drama. And to say that it would be an understatement—well, saying *that* would even be an understatement itself, for this issue proved, once again, to be an intriguing one.

The creatures dwelling in the *Quantum Substratum* are slowly beginning to affect the hard world, gradually getting to the point where they're not only feeding on humankind's problems, but also causing them. Last issue, we were faced with the evil *Lurk*, and now *Vex* has gained access to the hard world as well—much to *Michael Alexander's* anger, I imagine.

Another current subplot is the one concerning The Puritan and his son. So far, I'm still clueless as to what this man really wants, but now that Mercy has gotten herself involved, I fear this particular plot has just taken an ugly turn.

Right now, *DARK DOMINION* has a myriad of spicy subplots running loose, and with a main character as intriguing as Glimmer, this book's success is a safe bet!

Defiantly,
Olav Beemer
Zeist, The
Netherlands



This
is
the
way
the
world
ends...
This
is
the
way
the
world
ends...
This
is
the
way
the
world
ends...
With
a
bang!

SCHISM™

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU DREAM

The story so **BIG** it takes
every August **DEFIANT** title
PLUS a special 4-issue
SCHISM mini-series to tell!

Written by Jim Shooter
with Len Wein
Art by David Lapham
and Dick Giordano



A movie poster with a solid blue background. On the right side, there is a large, dark silhouette of a castle tower with battlements at the top. A single white rectangular window is visible on the tower's side. The text is arranged on the left side of the poster.

SHOOTER

BOONE

DIGITAL CHAMELEON

POLLINA AND

WEIN

ARE

DEFIANT[®]

A R E Y O U ?



Jim Shooter

EDITOR IN CHIEF

I performed my *How To Create Comics Seminar* in Los Angeles recently, ably assisted by the legendary writer/creator Len Wein.

Just before the Seminar began, I was presented with a wonderful gift and the following letter:

April 9, 1994

Dear Mr. Jim Shooter,

It's been almost a year since I attended your first "How to Create Comics" seminar. It has been a glorious year for me. As you are probably already aware (from previous correspondence), I am most appreciative of you for my new outlook on literature. What I haven't mentioned is my new propensity for creativity. For this I thank you also.

Creativity sometimes takes unusual forms and sometimes it becomes a compelling force. That is precisely how it accosted me. A few months ago I was at the ocean with my two sons. While walking along the beach at the water's edge I found a slab of metal, half buried in the surf. It was an old piece of metal, corroded and pitted from probably many years in salt water. It had probably broken away from a sunken ship. It was obvious to me that it had no intention of lying at the bottom of the ocean, being battered and bashed by the elements. Somehow it made its way through a perilous journey to rest on the beach. When I found it, it was clear to me that it said one thing...DEFIANT.

During the following months I did

my best to interpret what was written in that hunk of metal. Working sometimes only minutes, sometimes working for hours at a time. I am not sure if I interpreted its message fully because, to me, it doesn't look any different than the day I found it washed up by the surf.

Today I give it to you for the next part of its journey, because it like you shall persevere no matter what perils arise.

For me, the journey is just beginning. My creativity is headed in a new direction, writing. Since I'm being taken along for the ride, I thought that I would pack up my imagination and explore that region, Where Only the Limits are Imaginary. I have so much trust in you as a guide to that realm that I have brought my sons to your seminar today so that they too will know the path to the same limitless enjoyment.

Thanks For Everything

Sincerely,

Steve Pendleton

I was sincerely moved by the whole thing. My sincere thanks again to Steve Pendleton.

The Seminar went very well, thanks to Bill Liebowitz and the people of Golden Apple Comics, who co-sponsored the Seminar with DEFIANT, and made all the arrangements. As always, all proceeds were donated to charity.

The evening before the Seminar, just before the autograph party for



Len and me held at the Melrose Avenue Golden Apple store, I had a chance to sit down with Bill for a while and talk about the state of the industry.

Bill is a veteran in this business, he's tough, smart, experienced and wise. He made a few observations that are both thought-provoking and chilling. Bill said that the speculation boom the industry went through during the last seven years, a lot of *regular readers*, people who read, enjoy and save their comics, became alienated. The tidal wave of holograms, die-cut glow-in-the-dark-foil-stamped-etc. covers, deaths, rebirths, crippings, and restarts of old titles from #1's, designed to squeeze every dollar out of every comics buyer, ended up discouraging and driving away many of the *readers* who were the backbone of the market. People don't like feeling exploited, milked, bilked and screwed. When the speculators discovered that the cases of *X-Men* #1 or the rebirth of Superman they'd bought were not appreciating in

value (because—big surprise—there are *millions* of copies), *they* deserted the market, leaving the comics business in big trouble—no speculators, fewer readers and...big trouble. More than a thousand comics stores have gone out of business since last summer.

Bill says that the *only* way out of this nightmare is for publishers to focus on story, and create accessible, cutting-edge comics with that personality and *attitude*—a little daring, a little different, a little, well...DEFIANT that people can really get into.

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Defiantly,

Jim Shooter
FYM



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Pauline Weiss

SENIOR EDITOR

In the short time I've been editing comics, I've found that there are an awful lot of fun things you get paid to do. So far, everything having to do with getting to know our readership has been the best, but nothing has quite compared to the weeks I spent sifting through the hundreds of entries into our "Bad Guys" contest, co-sponsored by *Wizard* and *Entertainment Retailing* Magazines. One reader and one retailer would be chosen on the basis of a short essay. The prizes are a cash award of \$1000 and a special guest appearance in a future issue of *The Good Guys*...in which their characters get to die!

All of the entries were tremendously creative, and nearly all of them came up with fabulous characters with equally fabulous (and occasionally hilarious) powers, ready to go up against the Good Guys. Some of my favorite powers included a passion for colorful clothing (*Dori Ann Granger*, Orwell, OH), the ability to consume vast amounts of meat (*Tasadduq Hussain*, Tampa, FL), and a lip curl Elvis would be jealous of (*Aaron Paker*, Rancho Cucamonga, CA). I'd agree—these are definitely qualities any bad guy worth his salt *ought* to have!

After long rounds of difficult deliberations, judges Jim Shooter, myself, *Good Guys* writer Len Wein and artist Greg Boone are happy to congratulate our winners, *Dina Gamboni* from Short Hills, NJ, and *John Such*, the owner of Papa John's Comics in Greenville, SC.

Dina is a senior at Barnard College in New York, majoring in psychology. She's currently spending her summer working at a camp with disabled adults. Dina's been reading comics for about two years, and lists *Spawn* and *Catwoman* among her favorite titles. Her essay describes her bad guy character as the ultimate seductress, who will "make you fall in love and

will break your heart...will take not only your heart, but everyone you hold dear...will discover your goals, your ambitions, your *secret dreams*...and shatter them like so much worthless china."

John's "secret identity" is a design engineer. He grew up on the classic Marvel books—the *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man* were his favorites. His son is an avid comics collector, which drew John back into comics, and he decided to start his own store as a sideline about a year-and-a-half ago. He's created his own character named Apap, the Dream Stealer. "I sell imagination, and I want yours. I thrive to see your thoughts totally wrapped up in a comic I sell you...the more you imagine, the better price I get

for your thoughts...my world *feasts on your dreams*."

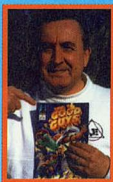
As you can tell, these two folks are hardly *truly* evil, but they got into the spirit of the contest, had some fun with the idea, and ultimately they both locked into part of the essence of the Defiant Universe:

dreaming and imagination. Look for their appearances—and their *demises*—in upcoming issues of the *Good Guys*.

Our thanks to all of you who entered the contest. However: after weeks of reading entries from all you bad guys out there who threatened to kill my goldfish, eat my left leg for dinner or cause the next 7.2-on-the-Richter-Scale earthquake in the New York area if *DEFIANT* didn't pick you as the baddest guy in the universe, I have to ask—y'all were just joking, right?

I mean, my goldfish are safe...right?

Pauline Weiss



John and Dina. They're b-a-a-a-d.



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